



# Five Factors to Consider When Selecting an Open Source Infrastructure Management Vendor

To manage IT like a business, you need tools to proactively ensure IT service reliability while simultaneously boosting operational agility. This requires a new approach to IT infrastructure management, including the selection of an infrastructure management vendor that can meet modern IT and business requirements.

CA Unified Infrastructure Management (CA UIM) is a unified IT management solution that offers deep monitoring functionality within a single, unified view and architecture. While there are multiple IT monitoring platforms available on the market today, many of which support the various needs of enterprise organizations and managed service providers (MSPs), many companies still struggle to select a platform that can meet their IT and business needs, both current and future.

If your team is considering an open source Infrastructure Management platform such as Icinga, Zabbix or Nagios XI, you should consider the following five factors before making a vendor or platform decision: does the platform ensure *ease of ongoing management*, support a *unified view* of your IT ecosystem, have strong *analytics and reporting*, have *deep infrastructure management* of the modern IT environment, and supports a *lower total cost of ownership*?

## Five Factors to Consider

1. Ease of management
2. Unified platform
3. Analytics and reporting
4. Depth of infrastructure management
5. Supports lower TCO

### **1. Does the vendor support a straightforward deployment and ongoing management process? *Is the platform easy to deploy and configure and free of custom scripting? Does the vendor platform have limited ongoing administrative requirements?***

Due to the increasing demands on modern business and IT, companies are looking for a solution that can be configured without customizations. Many Infrastructure Management platforms require the customer to engage in deep customizations, including custom script development, in order for the platform to monitor and manage the IT environment effectively. However, these customizations can create ongoing management problems, often adding cost and complexity to your Infrastructure Management strategy. First, custom scripting requires you to have someone on staff who is trained in creating scripts as the need arises. Second, custom scripts often create issues later on, when the company seeks to upgrade its software to newer versions. Deep customizations and custom scripts can often prevent a seamless upgrade process.

- **Fast time to deployment:** CA supports a simplified installation and deployment process with a step-by-step visual wizard to make sure your monitoring environments are configured properly the first time.
- **Easier ongoing management:** CA's focus on "configuration not customization" supports an agile platform that allows users to configure monitoring and management operations without needing to develop custom scripts. Custom scripts requires dedicated, knowledgeable personnel dedicated to creating customized code to support specific processes. In addition, custom coding and scripts can impact with a company's ability to easily upgrade to newer offered versions.
- **Faster application deployment:** CA supports agile operations with out-of-the-box monitoring for over 140 technologies, such as Docker, CloudStack, Cassandra, JBoss, OpenStack, & more.

### **2. Does the vendor support a unified view of your IT environment? *Does the platform support a single, unified view of your IT environment, with unified dashboards and reporting?***

CA Technologies has ensured that CA UIM presents a single, unified view of your entire IT environment.

- **Unified view of your entire IT environment:** CA supports a single view of your IT environment and has the ability to dynamically "drill-down" with out-of-the-box dashboards and custom views that deliver visibility of all IT systems, networks, and services important to the organization.
- **Streamlined Infrastructure Management tools:** Stop having to rely on dozens of disjointed point tools. Your organization can streamline administration and support the delivery of new services, applications, and technologies more quickly and effectively.

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3. **Does the vendor support native analytics and reporting?** *There is a significant difference between “operational reporting” and analytics. Does the vendor support analytics that allow for rapid root-cause resolution and proactive identification of potential performance hotspots?*

In the last few product releases, CA UIM has significantly expanded on supported analytics to help rapidly solve performance issues and proactively identify emerging ones.

- Network interface views: These views provide a rich look into critical networking components, showing detailed information about each interface and making it easy to identify problems.
- Advanced analytics: Summary analytics provide out-of-the-box intelligence to proactively identify potential performance issues:
  - ✓ *Health Index Report*: rapid identification of underperforming IT assets with historical trending, used to identify aging performance of a specific component or group of assets.
  - ✓ *At-a-Glance Reports*: time-series data for a network component or device.
  - ✓ *Top-N Reports*: tabular report that can be filtered by multiple variables to pinpoint underperforming components.
  - ✓ *Situations to Watch*: report that displays the number of days before an infrastructure element reaches a threshold violation.
  - ✓ *Trend and Group Trend Reports*: reports that display time-series data for either 1) a single metric and a set of up to ten devices or 2) interfaces within a group.
- Integrated analytics in dashboards: CA supports integrated analytics, such as bandwidth utilization, within each dashboard.

4. **Can the vendor support modern Infrastructure Management requirements with deep Infrastructure Management capabilities?** *The platform should support deep monitoring capabilities to oversee the physical network, the virtual/cloud network, applications, and databases.*

CA UIM assists the modern IT organization by supporting the monitoring of physical and virtual servers, databases, applications, HVAC devices as well as public, private, and hybrid clouds.

- Broad support for modern technologies: Amazon Web Services, Apache Hadoop, Cisco UCS and network devices, NetFlow, Citrix XenApp, XenServer and XenDesktop, Linux servers, Microsoft Azure, Microsoft SQL Server, Microsoft Windows servers, Oracle databases, Salesforce.com, and VMware.
- Integrated network utilization and bandwidth analysis: gain insights into application consumption on the network through a streamlined workflow.
- Support for “big data” monitoring: monitor the performance of traditional IT infrastructure along with big data environments such as Hadoop, Cassandra, and MongoDB through a single, unified architecture.
- Self-Certification: self-certify new devices—there’s no need to wait for the vendor to certify them, allowing rapid adoption of emerging technologies.

5. **Does the vendor’s solution support a lower total cost of ownership?** *Many open source solutions require extensive custom coding and custom scripting in order for the platform to monitor the specific IT ecosystem of a company.*

CA UIM has taken a “configure not customize” approach to monitoring, supporting out-of-the-box easy configurations to support specific monitoring needs of your organization. Many open source platforms require a dedicated resource on staff to be able to customize the open source platform specific to the needs of the company. Creating open source platform customizations also often prevent seamless upgrades to newer released versions. Many open source vendors also lack formal, dedicated technical support organizations to provide consistent technical and professional services globally.

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## Conclusion and Findings

To identify how CA UIM stacked up against 3 open source solutions – Nagios, Zabbix, and Icinga – Apprize360 interviewed current and former users of each of the described platforms. Interviews and our internal assessment focused on each of the open source solutions ability to meet each of the five infrastructure management selection factors outlined above. In our assessment, we found that CA UIM met all five selection factors and provided capabilities to meet the modern enterprise’s IM needs to proactively ensure IT service reliability while simultaneously boosting operational agility

CA has added deep infrastructure monitoring and analytics capabilities to help the modern enterprise to manage IT like a business. This requires a new approach to IT infrastructure management, including the selection of an infrastructure management vendor that can meet modern IT and business requirements. While open source vendors evaluated have added important capabilities over the last few years, CA has mapped its UIM solution to the needs of the modern enterprise with deep IT monitoring, intelligence self-analytics, and to insure enterprise scalability.

### Legend

 Fully Present	 Partial Functionality (~75%)	 Partial Functionality (~50%)	 Minor Functionality (~25%)	 Feature Absent (0%)
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Comparing CA Unified Infrastructure Management to Open Source Infrastructure Management Vendors				
	CA Unified Infrastructure Management	Nagios XI	Zabbix	Icinga
<b>Ease of Deployment</b> Wizard-based deployment of the platform with easy to deploy agents/robots for data collection.				
<b>Ease of Management</b> Supports configuration over costly custom scripting to create monitoring processes for specific needs.				
<b>Supports lower total cost of ownership (TCO)</b> Limited hidden costs, no need for a dedicated technical engineer to support custom scripting				
<b>Breadth of IT Monitoring</b> Deep monitoring of physical network, cloud, and application environments. Includes monitoring of storage devices and database applications. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Databases and applications</li> <li>▪ VoIP and Unified Communication devices</li> <li>▪ Virtualization/Cloud environments</li> <li>▪ Datacenter monitoring</li> <li>▪ Application response monitoring</li> </ul>				
<b>Interactive Reports with Self-Serve Analytics</b> Empowers non-technical users to explore data with slicers, pivots and drilldowns. Easily build custom reports without the need for specialized report development skills or modifications to underlying data structures.				
<b>Advanced Analytics</b> Summary analytics and proactive trending reports to quickly troubleshoot root causes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Trend Report, Top N Reports, Situations to Watch, At-A-Glance Reports, and Health Index Reports</li> </ul>				
<b>Integrated network flow and bandwidth utilization analytics</b> Integrated network flow and bandwidth utilization within dashboards, supporting fast root cause analysis and prioritization and forecasting of workloads				
<b>Enterprise Scale &amp; Performance</b> Ability to manage up to 100,000 devices within an Enterprise or for an MSP				
<b>Enables Monitoring as a Service</b> Architecture enables monitoring as a service for managed services providers (MSP)				
<b>Integration of non-IT Data</b> Supports integration of both IT & non-IT data together for holistic analysis.	